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The Europeanisation of local government against all odds? Evidence from Germany.

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1. Introduction

Research Questions

1. What Europe-related activities can we find at the local level?
2. Which factors determine the variation of Europe-related activities at the local level?

State of the Art

- » Lack of conceptual consistency and systematic approach
 - › No common understanding of Europeanisation
 - › Case-specific interpretations
- » Research literature with strong bias for small-N case studies
- » Hardly any quantitative analysis yet

2. Theory

Figure 1. Dimensions of the Europeanisation of local government.

		Addressees	
		External	Internal
Orientation	Vertical	Dimension: „Uploading“ Mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective Action • Expertise Local responses: “Influencing”	Dimension: „Downloading“ Mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaption • Strategic Action • Cognitive Learning Local responses: “Organising”
	Horizontal	Dimension: „Crossloading“ Mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Coordination Local responses: “Acting European”	Dimension: „Dissemination“ Mechanisms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Incentives Local responses: “Spreading Europe”

2. Theory

Determinants of Europe-related activities at the local level

Determinants	Variables
(1) Capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial resources• Human resources• Institutional resources
(2) Affectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closeness to border• Proportion of foreigners• Location of university
(3) Resource dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dependency on EU funding• Overnight stays of non-resident foreigners
(4) Political Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Party political composition of local council• Awareness of local voters for European affairs• Priority on Budget consolidation
(5) Control variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population size• Type of local authority (Independent city or town/municipality)

3. Methodological Approach

Methodological Approach

- » Survey on Europe-related activities at the local level in the German federal state North Rhine-Westphalia (396 local entities)
 - › 23 independent cities
 - › 373 towns and municipalities
- » Survey addressed different subject areas of European affairs, such as:
 - › Importance of Europe as a topic
 - › Organizational structure in relation to Europe-related activities
 - › Importance and frequency of certain Europe-related activities (26 items)
- » 46,0 % (182 out of 396) of all local authorities participated in the survey.
- » Use of official statistics on political and socio-economic data

4. Empirical Findings

Europe-related activities at the local level in North-Rhine Westphalia

Table 3: The importance of Europe as a topic on the municipality's agenda.

	N	very low	rather low	Intermediate	rather high	very high	missing	average	s.d.
Total	179	9.5 % (17)	37.4 % (67)	30.2 % (54)	19.0 % (34)	3.9 % (7)	3	2.70	1.01
Independent cities	16	0.0 % (0)	18.8 % (3)	31.3 % (5)	50.0 % (8)	0.0 % (0)	0	3.31	0.79
Towns and municipalities	163	10.4 % (17)	39.3 % (64)	30.1 % (49)	16.0 % (26)	4.3 % (7)	3	2.64	1.01

4. Empirical Findings

Europe-related activities at the local level in North-Rhine Westphalia

Table 4: How did the importance of Europe as a topic change?

	N	strongly declined	declined	did not change	increased	strongly increased	missing	average	s.d.
Total	176	0.0 % (0)	10.2 % (18)	43.4 % (79)	39.6 % (72)	3.8 % (7)	6	3.39	0.72
Independent cities	16	0.0 % (0)	0.0 % (0)	18.8 % (3)	68.8 % (11)	12.5 % (2)	0	3.94	0.57
Towns and municipalities	160	0.0 % (0)	11.3 % (18)	47.5 % (76)	38.1 % (61)	3.1 % (5)	6	3.33	0.72

4. Empirical Findings

Europe-related activities at the local level in North-Rhine Westphalia

Table 9: The importance of Europe-related activities measured by the frequency in different areas of activity on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (often).

	Total			Independent cities			Towns and municipalities		
	Score	SD	N	Score	SD	N	Score	SD	N
Europe-related activities total	2,4	0,79	182	3,4	0,79	16	2,3	0,73	166
Organising	2,2	0,79	182	3,2	0,81	16	2,1	0,71	166
Influencing	2,2	1,07	181	3,6	1,19	16	2,0	0,95	165
Spreading Europe	2,9	0,82	181	3,6	0,72	16	2,8	0,80	165
Acting European	2,5	0,96	182	3,3	1,05	16	2,4	0,91	166

4. Empirical Findings

Determinants of Europe-related activities at the local level in NRW

Table 1: Regression analysis: Europe-related activities (Standardised Coefficients. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$).

		Dependent variables				
		Index of Europe-related activities	Dimension I: Organising	Dimension II: Influencing	Dimension III: Spreading Europe	Dimension IV: Acting European
	Independent variables	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>Beta</i>
Capacity	Financial resources	0.168*	0.112	0.134	0.195*	0.209**
	Human resources	-0.022	0.029	-0.024	-0.047	-0.098
	Institutional resources	0.387***	0.393***	0.344***	0.278***	0.353***
Affectedness	Proximity to next country	0.171***	0.146**	0.147***	0.126**	0.231***
	Proportion of foreigners	-0.207***	-0.157**	-0.152**	-0.220***	-0.239***
	Location of university	0.194***	0.223***	0.233***	0.074	0.202**
Ressource dependency	Overnight stays of non-resident foreigners	0.056	0.074	0.092	-0.013	0.043
	Obtaining of ERDF and/or ESF funds	0.076	0.104	0.032	0.090	0.033
Political pressure	Municipal debt (cash credit)	-0.112	-0.090	-0.051	-0.074	-0.221**
	Share of left parties	0.125*	0.157**	0.147**	0.043	0.111
	Turnout EP Elections 2014	0.051	-0.003	0.086	-0.006	0.142*
	Budget consolidation program	0.028	0.023	0.046	-0.016	0.067
Control variables	Population (ln)	0.062	-0.155	0.014	0.308**	0.140
	Independent City	-0.003	0.161	0.084	-0.243**	-0.071
N		159	159	158	158	159
Adjusted R ²		0.557	0.509	0.479	0.432	0.484

5. Conclusion

Europeanisation of local government against all odds?

- » Against odds of euroscepticism: Local Governments do act European and adapt their actions towards European regulation, opportunity structures, and also values.
- » In the view of local governments, the importance of Europe is still growing
- » Nevertheless, there is a considerable variance between local governments
- » Another odd of local government is the most important factor for the variance: the capacities to cope with Europe depend strongly on the financial leeways of local governments

Appendix

Table A1. Theoretical concepts and indicators.

Theoretical concept	Indicator	Operationalization	Source
Capacity	Financial resources	Municipal spending per capita in 2015	Bertelsmann Stiftung. Wegweiser Kommune.
	Human resources	Municipal spending for administrative staff in 2015	Bertelsmann Stiftung. Wegweiser Kommune.
	Institutional resources	Administrative unit for Europe-related topics within municipal administration Dummy variable 0=no administrative unit 1=administrative unit	Own survey
Affectedness	Closeness to the border	Distance between the municipalities' centre and the nearest border in kilometers	Own compilation
	Proportion of foreigners	Proportion of foreigners in the municipalities' population in 2015	Landesdatenbank NRW
	Location of university and/or college of higher education	University and/or college of higher education located in the municipality	Own compilation
Resource dependency	Overnight stays of non-resident foreigners	Overnight stays of non-resident foreigners in the municipality per capita in 2015	Landesdatenbank NRW
	Use of ERDF and/or ESF funds	Sum of ERDF and/ESF funds used within the municipality per capita between 2014 and 30.06.2016	Own compilation
Political interests	Municipal debt (cash credit)	Municipal debt (cash credit) per capita in 2015	Landesdatenbank NRW
	Share of left parties in the municipal council	Share of left parties (SPD, Die Linke, Bündnis90/Die Grünen Piraten) in the municipal council after the last municipal elections in 2015	Own compilation Source: Landesdatenbank NRW
	Turnout European Elections 2014	Turnout in European Elections 2014 in the municipality	Landesdatenbank NRW
	Participation in program for budget consolidation	Participation of the municipality in the state program "Stärkungspakt Stadtfinanzen"	Own compilation Source: Ministerium für Inneres und Kommunales des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen
Control variables	Population Size	Number of inhabitants (ln)	Landesdatenbank NRW
	Types of local authority	Dummy variable 0=Towns and municipalities 1=Independent cities	Own compilation